

## **Establishment of a NWFZ in the region of the Middle East (L.1)**

Explanation of vote by

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Mr. Chair,

Israel has once again joined the consensus on resolution L.1 entitled "The Establishment of a NWFZ in the Middle East", notwithstanding our substantive reservations regarding certain elements of the resolution. We have done so since Israel remains committed to a vision of the Middle East evolving into a zone free of Chemical, Biological, and Nuclear weapons as well as ballistic missiles. Yet Israel has always maintained that these issues, as well as all regional security issues, could be only realistically addressed within the regional context.

As widely recognized by the international community, the establishment of a NWFZ should emanate from within the region. It can only be based on arrangements freely arrived at through direct negotiations between the states of the region and those directly concerned applying a step by step approach..

This process should begin with modest CBMs carefully selected so as not to detract from security margins of any regional state, followed by the establishment of peaceful relations, reconciliation, mutual recognition and good neighborliness, and complemented by conventional and non-conventional arms control measures. This process could, in due course, lead to more ambitious goals, such as the establishment of a mutually verifiable Nuclear Weapons Free Zone.

In this context it should be recalled that in the Middle East, unlike other regions in the world where nuclear weapons free zones have been established, there are continuing threats against the very existence of the state of Israel. These threats are significantly exacerbated by the irresponsible behavior of certain states in the region and beyond

concerning the export of WMD-related technologies to the region and the discrepancies between their non proliferation commitments and their actual behavior.

The international community should not overlook the fact that the vast majority of non-compliance cases with the NPT — 3 out of 4 widely acknowledged cases — have taken place in the Middle East and another case is currently under investigation.

Israel will continue to dedicate all its efforts to achieve a stable environment of peace and reconciliation in the ME and we call upon our neighbors to do the same.

Thank you Mr. Chair.